

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

TOWN HALL RENOVATION PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

October 28, 2013

LOWER LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM L101, TOWN HALL

- I. Call to Order –the meeting was called to order at 5:34 PM by Chairperson McBride.
- II. Roll Call – Members present: Scott McBride, Chairperson; Myra Cohen; Sharon Braverman; Bill DeBlasio; and Pam Raynock (arrived at 6:00 PM). Others present: Members of the public; John Salomone, Town Manager; David King, Kaestle Boos Associates; Joe Desautel and Ed Moriarty, Downes Construction Company; Lou Jachimowicz, Chief Finance and Operations Officer; Bruce Till, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation; Robert Korpak, Director of Facilities Management; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.
- III. Public Participation – None.
- IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – Mrs. Cohen made a motion that the minutes of the July 15, 2013 meeting be approved as presented. A second to the motion was provided by Mrs. Braverman. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 4 YES to 0 NO.
- V. Discussion of Community Center Concepts – No formal action taken. Mr. Salomone informed the Committee that Town staff had been working on an appropriate plan for both buildings with the Project Architect and the Construction Manager. A plan for the Community Center will be presented at this meeting. The construction budget for it is between \$8 million and \$9.4 million. A steel building is also being considered. There is a large expansive space that lends itself well to a steel building. A steel building could lower the cost.

A presentation, with a handout, was then made by Mr. King. It included a visual layout of the site, adjacent to wetlands, with 117 parking spaces. There was a rendering of the building exterior. The original program space request was 38,600 square feet; it is now at 30,383 square feet. The floor plan was presented, showing a single story plan. This was followed by elevation drawings of how the exterior might look. A wall section drawing, building section drawing, and the cost estimate were also included in the handout. The Town could have a pre-engineered metal building for the gym or for the

whole building. This has yet to be determined as discussions with two metal building contractors are currently underway but have not been concluded.

Mrs. Cohen asked about the location of the handicapped parking. This will be located in front of the building by the anticipated location of the pool. Chairperson McBride asked about the entrance off of Garfield Street that had originally been discussed. As there would be less asphalt, it would be less expensive to access the building off of Willard Avenue. This also separates the building from the planned Town Hall entrance. A site line assessment would be performed as the project moves forward. Mr. McBride asked about a drop off area for buses. This is not on the plan but could be added. Mr. McBride asked about the impact upon the annual Extravaganza and fireworks. The Town will still be able to set off fireworks but the building will have to be vacant. If the Town were to move the pool, as projected in the future, there would be even more space on the other side of the pond. Mr. Till has spoken with the youth soccer leadership. There is also other space in Town that can be used to meet their needs as well as the space where the pool is now. Regarding the gymnasium configuration, Mr. Till urged the Committee not to just focus on basketball. Volleyball, badminton and a lot of different programs will also use that space. Other individuals want more travel basketball teams. Two courts are the core of this proposed facility. At the same time this is not extravagant or a "Taj Mahal", staff is trying to keep the costs of the building down. It is also anticipated that youth basketball could be configured in a cross-court manner, but the planning process is not far enough along to be able to determine that with certainty. There will not be grandstands. There will be bleachers on a minimal basis. There will not be a movable wall between the two courts. There will be netting, similar to what the High School has. Mr. McBride asked if the gyms would be suitable for indoor soccer. Yes they will, as these are 50 foot x 84 foot courts with 10 feet between them. Mr. McBride asked if there would be space for meetings. Many of the rooms could have different uses. He asked if the Architect was concerned about the stability of a metal building. The building would be designed to meet certain codes and would have to be able to handle the requirements for snow loads, seismic loads, etc. The building will have a masonry base. The option is for a metal skin above that.

Mrs. Cohen expressed concern about locating the handicapped parking spaces on the end of the row. While closer to the eventual location of the pool, they would be away from the door. The handicapped spaces could be split up so that some are closer to the entrance. Mrs. Braverman asked about the aesthetics of a metal building. Panels can be smooth. There can also be insulated metal panels, designed to withstand being struck by basketballs, etc. With today's building products, the finish holds up for a long time. Mrs. Braverman asked if there was another site Committee members could look at. The City of New Britain's new police station was cited as one example, and also the Yale University tennis center. Metal buildings are a lot different now.

There are a lot of options to make metal buildings look good. The finished look on the outside will be same for either what is presented this evening or for a metal building. The cost for heat and air conditioning will be the same. Insulation can be sprayed on. Mr. DeBlasio asked about the longevity and maintenance of metal buildings. A metal roof can last longer than twenty years. He also asked about the difference between the net and the gross square footage, a 3,200 square foot difference. This is attributable to the thickness of the walls, corridor space, and mechanical space. Mrs. Raynock asked if what was presented was a conventionally framed building or a metal building. What was presented this evening would be constructed with structural steel and priced as a conventional building. Mrs. Braverman observed that there was only one window shown on the rendering in the vicinity of what would be considered the drop off area. Another window can be added. Most schools are masonry structures. This will not look like a school. You see metal buildings more for recreational buildings. Mrs. Raynock asked if a more than one story building had been looked at. Yes, the original concept had a two story building with an elevated walking track. It would cost a lot of money to add a second story in the future.

Mr. McBride asked if the size of the rooms met the growing needs of the Parks and Recreation department. Mr. Till was content with the proposed square footage. He was confident that the design meets the needs of the community, not only for the present but for the next several years. It is close in size to those of other communities. The walking track would go around the basketball courts. There were a lot of costs associated with an elevated track and a second floor. Mrs. Cohen asked about the space for the administrative offices. That space will hold two Recreation Supervisors, clerical staff, the Superintendent, a part time supervisor of special events, and a summer program coordinator. The space requested is not considered excessive. Mr. McBride asked about the Fitness Center. It will have a lot of cardio equipment, and will intertwine with aerobics. Mr. Till was confident that the square footage proposed was sufficient. He stressed that the Town was not trying to compete with commercial fitness centers. This space was more for yoga, dance and aerobics. Mrs. Cohen noted that equipment (Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment, or FF&E) was not part of the construction cost estimate. Mr. DeBlasio asked about the flooring surface in the gymnasiums. These will be a composite, synthetic surface. Mr. Till would have preferred wood. The flooring surface that is proposed has a little more resiliency to it and is less expensive.

- VI. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee – This project will not be on the ballot for a February referendum. An effort will be made to have it ready to be on a ballot later in the spring. Staff asked for permission and was directed to continue to work with the Construction Manager and the Project Architect to develop a program to recommend to the Committee. At least

three Committee members will be replaced after the election next week. The Community Center plans will be developed first. Then the focus will shift to the Town Hall. The Town Hall is where swing space and staging considerations will be a challenge. Both projects would be recommended to the Committee together. Mrs. Raynock stated that the Committee is still waiting for the numbers to come in. Despite the public's perception to the contrary, this project is not a done deal. She is happy that we will have the Board of Parks and Recreation members on the Committee. She appreciated Mr. McBride's leadership. She hopes that whoever fills the seats on the Committee will be civil and put partisanship aside. Mr. Salomone thanked the Committee and Mr. McBride for serving on this Project Building Committee and stated that they have done a terrific job in a difficult situation.

Funding from the State continued to be stalled regarding the roof for the Transition Academy. Due to concern about damage to the interior of the building, it was determined this project could not be put off any longer. Roof replacement will start within the next week without any state reimbursement. The work performed is not expected to be affected by any of the other renovations to the building currently anticipated. Mrs. Braverman asked about the cost. It will be just over \$100,000. She also asked about the roof materials. They will be the same type of shingles that will be used on the rest of the building, a product selected by the Committee some time ago. Mrs. Cohen was glad to hear that the roof work was moving forward. She also thanked Mr. McBride, who set a very good, welcoming, tone. He included the public which is important, as the final decision will be the referendum. Mrs. Braverman praised Mr. McBride for being a good and gentle leader. Mr. McBride said he appreciated everyone's demeanor and decorum.

- VII. Public Participation – Madey Kenney, 53 Crestview Drive. She feels that Mr. McBride and the Committee did a nice job and made the public feel welcome. She is in the habit of checking for bathrooms and exits. Other than the locker rooms, she doesn't see bathrooms on the drawings. Will more be included? What is the color on the drawing or the location of the kitchen? Has there been consideration of a traffic light at the entrance? What provisions are there for safety at the exits, such as an alarm if a door is propped open? For the Town Hall, will there be two plans, one with and one without Parks and Recreation? Where are community functions in the Community Center planned to be held? How many teens use the Teen Center and how often? Is it a hardship if the Teen Center is moved out of Town Hall? Regarding the Fitness Center, will staff monitor this area at all time? Who will be trained on the use of the equipment in the Fitness Center?

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. She thanked Mr. McBride, Mrs. Raynock, Mrs. Braverman and Mrs. Cohen. She also wants to see two plans for the Town Hall.

- VIII. Committee response to public participation – Before responding to Ms. Kenney’s specific questions, Mr. McBride noted that the Committee was not that far along in the project yet to answer some of these items. Plans were not in place for everything yet. Mrs. Raynock also asked for information on the toilet locations. They are in the locker rooms and the daycare center. More can be added. The kitchen is in the upper left corner of the floor plan presented, to the left of the grey area. In order to have a light on Willard Avenue a traffic study would have to be performed. Willard Avenue is a State road. It is too early to talk about security, other than to say that it is expected that the system that is being ordered for the fire department buildings is what will be installed here. The referendum question will be one question for the total amount to be approved. The Building Committee has decided to go with a separate building for Parks and Recreation. As to rooms for public meeting spaces, it depends on the activity. It is possible to run other activities in the gym. Smaller activities could take place in other areas. Extra spaces cost money to build. Mr. McBride’s experience with the Teen Center is that teens need four walls and someone to politely engage them. They need solid programs and good people to work there. Mr. Till reported that programs are held on Friday nights and normally have 20 to 30 teens at the present time. They have had 200 kids for a dance. Attendance depends on the program that is held. Just as it is at the Senior and Disabled Center now, a doctor’s approval to use the Fitness Center equipment would be needed. There are certified people in all Parks and Recreation classes; it would be no different for the Fitness Center. Mrs. Braverman asked about the walk from the building to the library. It will hook up with the current walkway around the pond. There is plenty of parking in order to alleviate the need to walk from one building to the other.
- IX. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 7:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Baron

Jeff Baron
Director of Administrative Services